

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

050953Z Dec 02

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	ED-01	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	HHS-01
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	ECA-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/008W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8277
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 002913

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOC](#) [VM](#) [DPOL](#)
SUBJECT: GOING AFTER MORE CORRUPT OFFICIALS

REF: A. HANOI 2777 B. HANOI 1485

1. (U) SUMMARY. CONTINUING ITS EFFORTS TO DEMONSTRATE
SERIOUSNESS IN AN ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE, THE GVN HAS FIRED A
PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, AND MAY PROSECUTE A
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FORMER CHAIRMAN OF ANOTHER PROVINCE. A SENIOR COURT
OFFICIAL HAS ADMITTED PUBLICLY THAT CURRENT PROSECUTIONS ARE
ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. THE GVN IS APT TO CONTINUE TO
MAKE SOME SCAPEGOAT PROSECUTIONS AND HEAVY PENALTIES,
INCLUDING THOSE RELATED TO THE UPCOMING "NAM CAM"
MAFIA/CORRUPTION TRIALS (NOW DELAYED UNTIL AFTER THE TET
HOLIDAYS END IN FEBRUARY), BUT IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE MUCH TRUE
PROGRESS IN ERADICATING CORRUPTION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) PRIME MINISTER PHAN VAN KHAI ON NOVEMBER 22 SIGNED
THE DISMISSAL OF YEN BAI PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN HOANG TRONG SOAN. SOAN HAD BEEN IN OFFICE FOR TWO
YEARS, QUICKLY MAKING A NAME FOR INITIATING ONE HUNDRED NEW
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, SUPPOSEDLY IN HONOR OF THE 100TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PROVINCE. ACCORDING TO
MEDIA REPORTS, HOWEVER, ALLEGATIONS SOON THEREAFTER BEGAN TO
FLY THAT SOAN WAS SKIMMING MONEY OFF THE CONSTRUCTION
BUDGETS, AS WELL AS GENERALLY FAVORING BUSINESSES CONNECTED
WITH HIS OWN FAMILY MEMBERS. SOAN HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH
ANY CRIME, HOWEVER; PM KHAI'S DECISION REFERRED ONLY TO
"MISTAKES" AND "WRONG-DOING" IN OFFICE.

3. (U) LOCAL MEDIA HAS ALSO REPORTED ON AN ONGOING
INVESTIGATION IN YEN BAI, ALLEGING THAT THE PROVINCIAL
EXPORT-IMPORT COMPANY SPENT UP TO FIVE BILLION VND (USD
333,000) TO BRIBE SOAN AND AS MANY AS 68 OTHER PROVINCIAL
AND CENTRAL GVN OFFICIALS. ONE FORMER HIGH-RANKING
PROVINCIAL OFFICIAL, DESCRIBED AS CURRENTLY A SENIOR
OFFICIAL OF THE STATE INSPECTORATE, REPORTEDLY ALONE
RECEIVED A BRIBE OF ABOUT 370 MILLION DONG (ALMOST USD
25,000). AT LEAST TWENTY OFFICIALS FROM YEN BAI PROVINCE
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MAY FACE PROSECUTION FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS CORRUPTION
CASE, ACCORDING TO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS.

4. (U) SEPARATELY, THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY IN
NOVEMBER ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD STARTED A FORMAL CRIMINAL
INVESTIGATION AGAINST NGO PHU THO, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE
DONG THAP PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE, ON CHARGES OF
"IRRESPONSIBILITY" REGARDING A SMUGGLING CASE. AT A TRIAL
IN JULY, PROSECUTORS HAD FORMALLY REQUESTED THAT CHARGES BE
FILED AGAINST THO, WHICH WAS REFUSED DESPITE A REPORT OF THE
SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT CRITICIZING THE INVESTIGATION OFFICE
FOR ITS FAILURE TO PROSECUTE THO IN THE FIRST PLACE.

5. (U) AT THE ONGOING SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
GENERAL PROCURATOR HA MANH TRI PUBLICLY CITED SEVERE
DIFFICULTIES IN DEALING WITH CORRUPTION CASES, CLAIMING A
"LACK OF ADEQUATE EVIDENCE" DESPITE CLEAR INDICATIONS OF
"THOUSANDS" OF CORRUPTION CASES. SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT
PRESIDING JUDGE NGUYEN VAN HIEN, SPEAKING TO PRESS RECENTLY,
EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE "308 CORRUPTION CASES"
UNDER TRIAL SO FAR OR HAVING BEEN TRIED ALREADY BY THE COURT
SYSTEM ONLY "REPRESENTED A TINY NUMBER" OF THE TOTAL CASES.

JUDGE HIEN CALLED FOR ALL LEGAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, ESPECIALLY THE PROCURACY AND THE POLICE, TO BE STRICTER IN DEALING WITH CORRUPTION CASES, AND TO USE LEGAL REMEDIES INSTEAD OF CONTINUING THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF PRIMARILY APPLYING ONLY ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENTS AGAINST CORRUPT OFFICIALS.

16. (U) COMMENT: WITH THESE RECENT ACTIONS AS WELL AS THE ONGOING INDICTMENTS AND UPCOMING TRIALS OF AT LEAST 155
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OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE NAM CAM MAFIA/CORRUPTION CASE (REFTELS) -- WHICH HAS NOW BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AT LEAST MID-FEBRUARY -- THE GVN IS TRYING TO DEMONSTRATE A WILLINGNESS TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AT ALL LEVELS. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN TAN DUNG, HOWEVER, RECENTLY PUBLICLY DRESSED DOWN A SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL FOR SUGGESTING THAT OFFICIALS ABOVE THE DEPUTY MINISTER LEVEL MAY BE INVOLVED IN THE NAM CAM CASE AND MIGHT FACE PROSECUTION; THE POLICE OFFICIAL SUBSEQUENTLY CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN MISQUOTED. PUNISHMENT AND PROSECUTIONS OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS ARE WELCOME STEPS, BUT ARE UNLIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL EITHER IN MAKING GENUINE PROGRESS TOWARD ERADICATING OFFICIAL CORRUPTION OR IN CONVINCING THE PUBLIC THAT THE GVN IS TRULY SERIOUS IN THIS EFFORT.
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